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The Negro by W. E. Burghardt Du Bois

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volume. Here as elsewhere the author shows a penchant for theorizing often on what appears to be a scarcity allowance of facts with the consequence that his conclusions do not always bear conviction.

One feature of the volume seems to deserve criticism. The style is often heavy and the meaning not readily grasped. Such sentences as the following are not uncommon: "The organisation of social life on class lines and the standardisation of it in terms of putative worth and authenticity, birth and antecedents, will also have contributed to a bias in favor of putative theoretical constructions and an interest in the lore of intrinsic, that is to say metaphysical, creatures and characters rather than in matter-of-fact" (p. 75, note). While this sentence is doubtless more difficult when removed from its context than otherwise, it certainly would not have meant less had it been stated in plain English. Yet in spite of this difficulty the book is an absorbing one full of stimulating and ingenious suggestion.

*The Negro.* By W. E. BURGHARDT DU BOIS. New York: Henry Holt. 1915. Pp. 252.

Dr. Du Bois has contributed this small book to the Home University Library Series, with the promise of a possible larger book later, in which he gives a summarized statement of the position of the Negro in the world's history. The subject is of course entirely too large for the size of the book but the result is a study which is extremely suggestive and which furnishes a stimulus and guide for further reading in this field.

Dr. Du Bois starts with the fundamental thesis that "there are no hard and fast racial types among men;" that the Negro race "is separated from the rest of mankind by no absolute physical line," though it "forms, as a mass, a social group distinct in history, appearance, and to some extent in spiritual gift." He emphasizes also the

two physical facts that underlie all African history: the peculiar inaccessibility of the continent to peoples from without, which made it so easily possible for the great human drama played here to hide itself from the ears of other worlds; and on the other hand, the absence of interior barriers—the great stretch of that central plateau which placed practically every budding center of civilization at the mercy of barbarism, sweeping a thousand miles, with no Alps or Himalayas or Appalachians to hinder.

Besides these he places the climate which has compelled the inhabitants of Africa to fight "a sheer fight for physical survival comparable with that in no other great continent." But even with these drawbacks the Negro has played no despicable part in human history. The culture of Egypt was largely negroid and many large states with varying degrees of culture were developed throughout Africa.

For the present inferiority of Negro culture and for the race prejudice felt by the whites against the Negroes, Dr. Du Bois accounts by the slave trade, Christian and Mohammedan. He estimates at one hundred million the number of Negroes actually enslaved or perishing as the result of the slave-trade. "Such a large number of slaves could be supplied only by organized slave raiding in every corner of Africa. The African continent gradually became revolutionized. . . . Further advances toward civilization became impossible. . . . It was a rape of a continent to an extent never paralleled in ancient or modern times." To the slave trade is attributed the complete demoralization of Negro culture and political organization.

In discussing the most recent movements among the Negroes in America, Dr. Du Bois considers that one most hopeful in which he has such an important place, the struggle, begun by the launching of the "Niagara Movement" in 1905 and the formation of the National Association for the Advancement of the Colored People in 1910, to gain for the Negroes their fundamental rights as American citizens. As to proposed solutions of the Negro problem, the first, that this working class should develop along the same paths as the European and American whites, was rejected almost before it was formulated. The second called for the virtual enslavement of the Negroes in certain industries, such as cocoa raising in Portuguese Angola. The third sought the result of the second by less direct methods, such as the peonage system in certain parts of the United States. The fourth, at present popular, would allow the Negroes to develop along their own native lives, but altruistic as this may sound, the real reason for its popularity is that the exploitation of Africa is rendered easier by the exclusion of Western culture and religion. In the meantime the Negroes have begun to think and their thoughts lead toward a Pan-African movement which shall result in "a unity of the working classes everywhere, a unity of the colored races, a new unity of men."